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# Ballet Today

15, Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey,  
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*Welcome  
Home  
to  
Sadler's  
Wells  
Ballet  
Company  
A Happy  
New Year  
to them  
and  
to all our  
Readers*



As we go to press it is announced that Margot Fonteyn has been made a Dame Commander of the British Empire for her services to Ballet.

This is an honour well deserved, and the news will be received with great pleasure not only by the British public in whose affection she is so firmly established, but by everyone who has been privileged to see this great artist.

On February 20th, the Royal Opera House is to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of its re-opening after the war, which took place in 1946. The above photograph of Margot Fonteyn in *Giselle* was taken in that same year.



# Ballet Today

Editor—Estelle Herf

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Cover Portrait

BERYL GREY

Photo: Baron

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MARGOT FONTEYN

Photo: Gordon Anthony

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Publication date for the March issue of BALLET TODAY will be 17th February. It will assist us if you will place a regular order with your newsagent or bookstall. In case of difficulty please write to us.

# LONDON

**D**URING the past few weeks the dance offerings on view in London have been extremely mixed; some needed quite a little searching for—a task easier for the critic who gets all the advance news, but harder for the dance-follower who isn't always aware when and where something unusual can be found. Half-a-dozen performances were on view in different places; some of them had little that appealed to the average balletgoer, but for the kind of dance-addict who is willing to look at something different there were moments which could help his appreciation of each sort of Dance, including Ballet.

Ram Gopal appeared in a modest recital, sponsored by the Asian Music Circle in November; there were some fresh items of his repertoire and what appeared to be re-arrangements of some older numbers. He danced with a wonderful ease and sensuousness and was as great a pleasure to watch as when he first appeared before a London audience. Shortly he returns to India to gather together the company with which he will present a full-scale India dance drama in this year's Edinburgh Festival.

Also in November we saw more Russians; a handful of Soviet artists were all brought together for two concert performances at the Princes Theatre, and the group included a folk-dancer from Uzbekistan and two junior ballet dancers from the Bashkir Province of the U.S.S.R. The folk dancing was lively and gay, the ballet items consisted of that kind of extremely acrobatic work that Struchkova and Shelest showed here on their earlier visits. All of it worth seeing simply because, in every way, it differed from our usual balletic diet.

To many balletgoers, Modern Dance is either a completely closed book, or something they don't allow themselves to become interested in; few of them know that the best school of Modern Dance in Europe is in London. The Sigurd Leeder School gave a series of programmes in its little and perfect studio theatre, near King's Cross, early in December; half the dances were works of Mr. Leeder and the rest of the programme was supplied by dance students of various grades—all of whom, under this system, have to study and work out choreography, as well as dancing. There were one or two fine dramatic works, and some quite brilliant lyric and comic dances (solos) created and danced by such fine talents as: Ludmila Mlada, Joan Cox, and Jean Cebbron. M. Cebbron is a male dancer worth going far to see and will be a remarkable asset to whichever company he joins when he finishes his studies

this year.

By the time Christmas was upon us, one's anticipation of the return of the Sadler's Wells Company to Covent Garden could be sharpened by viewing the various shows containing ballet, or something derived from and rather resembling, ballet. It would be a pleasure to boost *A Girl Called Jo* at the Piccadilly, an adaptation of the Louisa M. Alcott books into a musical on American life one hundred years ago, but it isn't quite distinguished enough either in script, music, production or dancing; a solid, quite workman-like job which, I think, has suffered from too weak a plot. Choreographer Michael Charnley makes a nicely rounded job of the few bits of dancing that the plot allows for, and some nicely talented dancers whom we've been seeing around in many companies and shows are on view, making very good bricks with very little straw; these include Betty Ash, Patricia Kirschner, Jenny Trevelyan, Ronnie Curran and Robin Winbow.

*Cranks*, a sort of one-man-band of John Cranko's talents, is at the Watergate; using four persons only it proves itself a new-ish revue idea, for the acts flow straight into one another and the performers move their scenery on and off and up and down, and change costumes on stage. The production-style and the choice of harpsichord and harp as instruments are good, workable, novel notions; there are some extremely funny pieces and some "corn" which isn't guyed enough to hide its corniness. When the author (who has written all the lyrics and patter) tries to go deep into What-Life-Is-About, he flounders in a bog of theatrical clichés. It is a good attempt which has not come quite off, simply because this kind of startling simplicity applied to revue would have to be shaped and blended and directed by someone with experience of a lifetime of revue-making . . . but, as an effort, it gets somewhere.

It is disappointing to report that *Where The Rainbow Ends* (a hopelessly old-fashioned and very un-Christmassy childrens' play, full of Edwardian vulgarities of patriotism) appears this year, at Festival Hall, in the poorest version I've yet seen of it. It ought to be lifted up (at least for the adults) by the spectacular ballet inserted in the Lakeside Scene. Last year this was a lovely John Taras piece of work, starring Markova; now it is the product of Keith Lester and stars Violetta Elvin; go and see Miss Elvin being as wonderful as usual, but don't expect any choreographic marvels—either subtle or splendid.

And so we get over Christmas



# REVIEW

and Boxing Day, and on New Year's Eve, here's the Sadler's Wells Company back in action, with a star-studded programme but, alas! not enough stellar brilliance on view. Beryl Grey and Svetlana Beriosova in *Les Sylphides* were excellently matched talents as the Mazurka and Prelude dancers; Philip Chatfield does not have quite the right sort of elegance and sinuousness that the male partner needs. Rosemary Lindsay, the other lead, can look wonderful and dances exquisitely at moments, but lacks that air of authority and out-of-this-world calmness, that should invest all the dances throughout.

The finale was *Homage to the Queen*, always too long and now seeming utterly endless, so laboured was most of the dancing; it is so filled with clever and tricky dances that it requires an excellent cast—in excellent form—and this was just not the case on this occasion. In between we got *Daphnis and Chloe*—and Margot Fonteyn, crowning the occasion, the ballet, and indeed the year 1955, with one of the most sumptuously satisfying performances she can ever have given in any role. A wonderful occasion and appropriately enough she had already

received (though the fact was yet to be announced) the dignity of Dame Commander of the O.B.E. Indeed, it proved an occasion of homage to the queen—of English Ballet; and no honour awarded in this New Year's List has been more deserved.

A. V. COTON

## Sophie Fedorovich Memorial Exhibition

WHAT would Sophie have thought of all this, I wondered, when I attended the opening of the Memorial Exhibition of her theatrical designs at the Victoria and Albert Museum on December 8th. She would have been very surprised, I know, to receive such an honour from this august institution, for she was always so self-effacing, a servant of the theatre who thought only of her art as a means to an end in which she sought no glory for herself. But she would have been very happy to see so many of her friends gathered together thinking

of her, for her friends meant everything to Sophie who was the soul of loyalty. She loved England, where she had found happiness, and she loved ballet, so it would have pleased her that a history of English ballet can be traced in these three rooms.

The exhibition has been arranged with much thought—the attractive catalogue is a model of its kind—and all of her work is represented. Here are the designs for Ashton's first ballet, *A Tragedy of Fashion*, the beginning of a friendship and collaboration during which she created the designs for eleven of his ballets. Here are those for *Les Masques*, given at the Ballet Club on Sunday evenings, and which is still in the repertoire of Ballet Rambert with the original decor—*Fête Etrange*, *Horoscope*, *Symphonic Variations* and *Veneziana*, the production of which she was not to see—they are all here, as well as the operas, the plays and the films even the cabaret turns. Also the actual costumes worn by actor, prima donna or ballerina, the headdresses and stage jewellery. Then there are the more personal memories—letters, photographs and such like; the taxi-driver's licence, a relic of the hard days when, as a Russian emigré, she earned her bread as a taxi-driver in Paris; or pictures of happier times among the roses of her beloved Norfolk cottage.

The art of Sophie Fedorovitch was free and spontaneous, never self-conscious—no turgid fumbings here or straining after effect. She was a genius of the theatre. With a few sure strokes she could create a heaven or a hell; and she had the vision that could set in a few sparse flowing lines and spring-like green the particular mood for a ballet such as *Symphonic Variations* (she once told me that she had first taken the idea for this from a plan showing the curving lines of a railway junction). But her subtle suggestive drawings were only the jumping off point for the stage pictures that enchanted us, and it is essential to see through and beyond them to the other side of the proscenium arch. This is where the illuminated models of stage settings are so magical. Here, glowing in a darkened recess are scenes for *Clair de Lune*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Orpheus* and the golden harps and stairs of Elysium.

Pigeon Crowle.

A scene from *Cinderella* with Fonteyn and Somes. This ballet was last performed in 1954 and is to be revived during January. The photograph was taken by Frank Sharman, F.R.P.S. in 1949, when first produced.





## Sadler's Wells Ballet Season in New York

### NO SINISTER FORCE

Friday, September 23, the first *Le Lac Des Cygnes* of the season with Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes as Odette-Odile and Prince Siegfried. Fonteyn's *Swan Lake* is unquestionably a superb performance. The poetry and music of her second and fourth acts are unsurpassed. It is difficult at best to describe a dancer's art and in Fonteyn's case, where there is so much subtlety, it is even harder. If it is permissible to borrow a term from song one might say that Fonteyn's is the art of 'bel canto'. Certainly there are startling comparisons to be found in such a simile. For she, too, possesses the long, continuous musical line, exquisitely shaded like some tone delicately spun out creating as it spins immediate poetry. And, like 'bel canto', there is the magic of a clear and instantaneous communication.

In the light of such gifts it may be considered carping to have any hesitations concerning Act III. Yet, the very things which make Fonteyn most beloved to us conspire against her Act II.

The sinister forces which move Odile appear never to have entered Fonteyn, as if the very spirit of Odette did exorcise them first. Muscular dynamics cannot replace knowledge nor force replace malignance. My only reservations concerning her Act III are of a dramatic nature for Fonteyn's dancing certainly warrants no criticisms. Now, at this time, the pyrotechnics of the *pas de deux* hold no more fears for her. There is brilliance and speed in plenty.

The production as a whole is in rare form. The Wells has obviously been polishing its *Swan Lake*. I cannot close this review without saying what an excellent Prince Siegfried Somes is.

### IMPECCABLE TASTE

On Friday, September 30, I managed to catch *Scenes de Ballet*, *The Firebird* and *Tiresias*. *Scenes de Ballet* is lyrical yet not musical. While Ashton is an inventive choreographer, his style in the abstract is far more personal, more subjective than, say, Balanchine, working in the same medium. Specially it is not as geometrically defined nor as three dimensional. Ashton is not always at one with the impetus from which the music springs. However, while *Scenes de Ballet* may not be an exciting or even satisfying choreo-musical experience, Ashton's impeccable taste keeps it from ever being gauche. Rowena Jackson,



Beriosova and Field in *Le Lac des Cygnes*

David Blair, Desmond Doyle, Ronald Hynd, Brian Ashbridge and Garry Burne, supported by a corps de ballet of twelve dancers, work effectively to one of Stravinsky's less effective scores.

### TRUE TO FOKINE

Any review of *The Firebird* must, even in passing, nod to a comparison of the Wells' reconstruction of Fokine's 1910 classic and Balanchine's fresh approach to Stravinsky's score. We have no way of knowing just how authentic this revival is. Forty-five years is a long time. Certainly, Serge Grigoriev and Liubov Tchernicheva are to be saluted for their careful and meticulous reconstruction of Fokine's masterpiece. The present *Firebird*, though it may fall short of the mark, is true to the spirit of Fokine in all respects. The intervening years have produced many changes in choreographic style. Today, what once must have been an exciting and revolutionary piece, appears

slowly paced and at times even a bit ponderous.

Fonteyn's *Firebird*, while danced with loving care and attention to details, is not the intensely exciting physical connotation of the magical bird. Hers is a musical performance but not one of force. Perhaps, Balanchine's approach to the dazzling bird of fire has spoiled us for the Fokine conception, which is couched less in terms of sheer bravura dancing. This is a moot point. The two versions somehow balance out. Balanchine's work for the title role is more exciting, and the interlude for the Prince and the Beautiful Tsarevna more lyrical, although in the latter, the Wells has two excellent protagonists in Michael Somes and Svetlana Beriosova, while the final scenes in the Fokine version are superior in pageantry and style. Ashton produces a commendable performance as the hideous Kostchei.

### HUMAN DETAIL LACKING

In *Tiresias*, Ashton has tackled

a very ticklish theme which requires choreographic invention of the nth degree as well as a great degree of subtlety. The primary failure of the ballet appears to lie in the fact that Ashton has paid so much attention to the structure of the legend and the reproduction of occasional frieze-like tableaux, that the actual meat of the legend escapes him. Legends, no matter how ancient, must always be told in terms of people. If the humanity of the man or woman escapes us the tale itself will have very little meaning. It is not enough to have two dancers who resemble each other or, for that matter, to have their qualities represented by syn-bolic dances. The switch in *Tiresias'* gender should bring with it great emotional changes which can be felt as well as visualized. The first scene, for *Tiresias* as a man, is almost devoid of this. We have only the vaguest hint of human qualities in the episode for *Tiresias* as a woman . . . and that, only in the *pas de deux* with Her Lover. *Tiresias*, re-worked, utilizing a tighter choreographic language, greater use of classic and modern styles for contrast and more attention to human detail, could be a fascinating ballet. Certainly the subject presents room for genuine creation.

Somes and Elvin turn in fine performances in their roles. Elvin, in particular, is given a chance to show what she can do with a dramatic role and she acquits herself very well. She projects a wonderful quality of growth from the loneliness of her scene among the shepherds to the radiant warmth of a woman in love. This is an Elvin we have not seen before. John Field makes an important contribution to the long and difficult *pas de deux* given Elvin and himself. Field has a capacity to project a tenderness which rarely appears among the Wells' male contingent.

### TOO WELL BORN

Saturday, October 1, I had an opportunity to catch *Coppelia* again, this time with Svetlana Beriosova in the role of Swanilda and Philip Chatfield in the role of Franz. Beriosova's approach to *Coppelia* is that of a young lady definitely too well born for the role. She needs more of a soubrette quality than she is giving it now. While her Swanilda is certainly up to the technical requirements of the part, for that matter, perhaps more so than any one else's, her

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## HOPE SHERIDAN'S REPORT (Contd.)

characterization lacks the peasant quality inherent in the role. Swanilda is a young lady whose fleeting jealousy is the impetus for all her curiosity. There is lacking, also, a certain play between the principals on stage. I'm sure that further attention to the dramatic values of the ballet by both Beriosova and Chatfield will add much of what is lacking at present. Beriosova has shown us that she has scope and definition previously and I believe that she can rectify her present approach to give us a saucy, peasant girl, too. We have a hint of that behaviour in her last scene with Coppélius. As to her variations, this girl possesses a beauty of line that is a constant pleasure to watch. While her turns still require more work, she is growing stronger and more brilliant with each performance. Philip Chatfield as Franz has not yet grasped the role although he has the right amount of boyish charm and brio. John Hart presents a much more doddering Coppélius.

### WORK REWARDED

Sunday evening, October 2, *Le Lac Des Cynes* with Violetta Elvin as Odette-Odile and John Field as Prince Siegfried. Elvin's

*Swan Lake* has improved greatly. Certainly this performance was a far cry from the one we saw two years ago. She appears more relaxed on stage and more at ease in the choreography. Although she is still not a musical dancer, her phrasing is better and she is slowly breaking away from the static quality her dancing has had for quite awhile. The effects of hard work are very much apparent. Elvin's performance at this point is approaching fulfillment of the dramatic exigencies of the role. Some of the technical requirements, however, still seem to evade her. Act II is her strongest, technically and Act III strongest, dramatically. A severely bruised Achilles tendon kept Elvin handicapped through most of the performance and necessitated technical changes in Act III, therefore judgment of her *Swan Lake* must be held over until another time. However, her best points, beautiful port de bras, back and pointes remain a pleasure. John Field makes a lyrical Prince and a very able partner. An excellent Act I *pas de trois* was danced by Linden, Blair and Lindsay.

### BERIOSOVA'S LAC

On Saturday afternoon, October 15th, Svetlana Beriosova made her first local appearance



in *Le Lac Des Cynes* partnered by John Field. There is a saying that "given the choice, the public will pick its own ballerina". If audience reaction is of any significance the Wells' choice has been justified. It is a pleasure to report that Beriosova's is a performance of the first order. We have seen on previous occasions that she possesses natural lyricism, magnificent port de bras and musicality.

Automatically these qualities outfit her for Acts II and IV. She is by gift a natural Odette. What remained to be discovered was the astonishing way in which she met the technical and dramatic requirements of Act III. Here the surprise lay. The sharpness of her definition for the character of Odile provides an excellent contrast to the softness of her Odette. Technically, she exhibited command and brilliance even though she has a tendency to lose speed on her travelling turns (*soutenu*). That is minor and should vanish with more performances. Beriosova's delineation of Odile as an enchantress is particularly rewarding for it possesses a natural physical appeal with just the right

amount of aloofness. A few more seasons should give this girl increasing control over the difficult dual role. There is room for growth in depth and power but Beriosova has the capacity to realize both. A brain is definitely in operation above that well trained body. If the emotional weather bodes fair, Beriosova's should be the Wells' Odette-Odile of the future. All the omens point in that direction.

John Field turned in a performance of compassion and tenderness, easily his best to date. He dances the male variation with ease and aplomb. There is also a truly gratifying rapport on stage between Beriosova and him which sustains the magic of this delicate tale. This *Swan Lake* was an exciting experience and a wonderful overture to the close of a season.

In her closing night speech Madame De Valois stated that the Sadler's Wells could dance for an American audience as it could dance for no other audience. Judging from the Wells' performances this season, she may rest assured that they are most certainly welcome in this city next year!

## CHICAGO

ONLY the presumptuous speak of a Renaissance, but even the most careful commentators acknowledge the increased amount of energy being expended on artistic endeavour in the Chicago of this decade. In the early part of the century, Chicago was a bawdy town but, I am told, vital with America's leading architects and writers and with a good assortment of painters, sculptors, musicians and also dancers. The Great Depression primarily, and subsequently the Second World War killed Chicago's spirit. During the thirties and forties the dull reigned; neither Chicago's criminals nor artists captured the attention and imagination of the world.

In contrast, the contemporary scene is interesting for visitor and resident alike. The Chicago Symphony, in its third season under Fritz Reiner, compares favourably with the great orchestras of the world; the young Playwrights Theatre's dramatic productions have several times put New York and London imports to shame; old Poetry Magazine has recently been given new life; Mies Van Der Rohe dominates the architectural scene; etc.

The newest contributor to Chicago's cultural entertainment is Lyric Theatre, an organization which has produced three fine

## ★ A NEW COMPANY—LYRIC THEATRE By GEORGE JACKSON

seasons of opera and in the last has included some ballets.

Edna Mc Rae was choreographer for the one production, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, of Lyric Theatre's brief first season. An expanded corps de ballet and soloists Patricia Wilde, Kenneth Johnson and Barbara Steele under choreographer Ruth Page's direction provided incidental dances for several operas during the second season. For the third season of Lyric Theatre at the Civic Opera House, October 31 to December 3, 1955, Miss Page staged two ballets, a masque and again the dances for the operas.

*Il Ballo Delle Ingrate* was first presented in 1608 at Mantua. This didactic poem by Ottavio Rinuccini tells of Venus and Cupid descending to Mantua's ducal court to admonish its prudish ladies. Not Venus' commands nor Cupid's entreaties move even one wise virgin to open up. To the rescue of Mantua's men comes Pluto, accompanied by tormented spinster spirits from hell, whose suffering convinces the reticent ladies that heaven is better. To support the libretto, Claudio Monteverdi had written simple, elegant and effective music which on this occasion was well performed by the singers (Ebe Stignani as Venus, Teresa Stich-Randall as Cupid, Kenneth Smith

as Pluto) and musicians in the pit. On stage however, the masque was a mess. Scenery, choreography and especially the cheap costumes conspired to make the whole production seem cluttered and congested. Vera Zorina as the on-stage Venus was dignified despite the silly prancing, undressing and redressing she had to do. There was little dancing for her or for Jane Bockman as Cupid and Ronald Frazier as Pluto. Only the solo dance for Barbara Steele as the leader of the tormented spinster spirits matched the direct appeal of the music and exploited the wonderful possibilities of the poem. This production was evidence against the theory "that opera is better heard than seen. If there is a story to tell it comes across better, or at least prettier, if dancers do the telling".

Miss Page's choreography for her balletic version of Lehar's *The Merry Widow* was slight, very slight but served as support for the stars of the occasion: Rolf Gerard's decors and costumes and Alicia Markova's dancing and acting. Markova is not a spontaneous comedienne; this was to her advantage. In the title role she was always slightly aloof and her actions came as a casual afterthought; she thus endowed with subtlety and wit what might otherwise have been an obvious and silly role. There

were two opportunities for her to dance. She took full advantage of the Balkan variation in the ballet's second scene, rendering it in her unique, highly purified lyric style. However, Markova and her partner merely sketched the airborne *pas de deux* of the third scene. Although the production given *The Merry Widow* was excellent, it dragged; there was simply not enough choreographic invention to keep up interest.

The second ballet of Lyric Theatre's season, *Revenge*, was also a transplant from sung theatre, being based on the Verdi opera, *Il Trovatore*. Despite what I am told were tempestuous rehearsals, *Revenge* was more successful than the masque or the other ballet. For although it came in starts and spurts and was often mannered, there was choreography—occasionally with symptoms of originality. The difficult dancing was divided between the role of the gipsy (Sonia Arova) and the role of the friend (Barbara Steele). Markova as Leonora concentrated on characterization and it was interesting to compare her conception of the role with Maria Callas' who had sung Leonora in the opera a few days earlier. Callas was the immensely proud, noble Spanish lady who is humanized by the familiar course

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**D**URING November *Knight Errant* was revived at the Opera de Paris. Also on the programme were *Springtime in Vienna*, a ballet by Harald Lander and Lalo's *Suite en Blanc*.

The music for *Knight Errant* was composed by Jacques Ibert, director of the Réunion des Théâtres Lyriques de France, on a libretto by Elizabeth de Gramont—inspired by Cervantes; the poems which punctuate the action are by Alexandre Arnou.

The piece is a complete success. The singing by soloists and choir, the varying rhythms of the dancing, the whole orchestration were of the highest standard, and the four scenic episodes flow, one from the other, with refined elegance. Pedro Flores scenery provides a worthy frame for Ibert's music, and Serge Lifar's choreography holds to a constant, sustained line whose

# FRANCE

grandeur is tinted with melancholy. In all the scenes—in the windmill and galley scenes, or in that in which the Knight of the mournful countenance meets his death at the hand of a strolling player—the movement of the soloists and the groups correspond to the pessimistic conception of the whole work, for in this presentation at the Opera we are shown, not an old hero mad with knightly dreams, but a young and handsome Don Quixote disappointed in his fight for ideals and justice.

Four stars interpreted the work—Mlles. Bardin, Darsonval, Christiane Vaussard and Espantina Cortes. Their talent is well known, but Lycette Darsonval, above all, found an opportunity to make a personal triumph of her role and she was really

brilliant.

Peter Van Dyck upheld the role which was created by Lifar. He has presence and nobility of posture, and he dances very well, but he certainly does not possess the magnetism which Lifar used to exert.

*Springtime in Vienna*, a ballet by Harald Lander based on Schubert's Second Symphony, with charming scenery and costumes by Jean Denis Maillart, was danced brilliantly by almost the whole company. There is no question here of a great ballet, but of a ballet made noteworthy by the efforts of all concerned—by the interpretation of the stars Micheline Bardin and Youli Algaroff and the premier danseurs Bari, Descombey and Pares—not forgetting the premières danseuses Josette Amiel and

Francine Collement, whose pied and ballon are remarkable. In the third scene, Micheline Grimoin danced a frenzied military polka.

*Suite en Blanc*—music by Lalo, choreography by Serge Lifar, brought together nearly all the stars of the corps de ballet—Michel Renault, very elegant, supple and vigorous, resplendent with all the gifts one expects from a fine French dancer; Nina Vyroubova whose perfect knowledge of dancing is allied to a temperament which allows her to perform in the most varied of roles; and finally Claude Bessy, who is not yet officially a star, but who will be one very soon—for she is a magnificent young dancer whose future—to the glory of the Opera—is assured.

Two Serge Lifar ballets in one evening? That is quite normal at the Opera, for masterpieces of that quality will live long in the repertoire. They are classic works, owing nothing to fashion or "stunts", and they are now hallowed by the history of the dance at the Opera.

## JEAN COUELLE ★ END OF SEASON ★ THE DE CUEVAS BALLET

**T**HE Marquis de Cuevas Ballet commanded attention this year more for its performers than for its new ballets. New creations—apart from *Achilles* were, *Joan of Arc*. Three tableaux from Joan of Arc's life. The action is described in their titles—Joan at Domremy, meditation and prayer before the battle; Joan, a prisoner, is condemned and given to the flames. In this ballet, with music by Philippe Gerard, the choreographic conception, clearly inspired by Lifar, and the setting, are so poor that the whole thing verges on the ridiculous.

*Saeta* tells the story of a gypsy, fanatically devoted to the adoration of a Black Virgin, who falls in love with a white-robed woman in whom he sees the reincarnation of his idol. His fate is to die, strangled in the folds of the white robe.

This, work with a very curious setting by Stubbing, got off to a good start but fell flat in the second tableau where indescribable confusion developed. There have since been changes which have made the piece into one of the most interesting works of its choreographer, Ana Ricarda.

*The Desert Prince*, Skibine's second ballet of the season, is an opus of the silent cinema variety. A woman explorer is bored with the company of her husband, who is somewhat lacking in sex-appeal and so she makes no difficulties about being abducted by an Arab prince (who bears a striking resemblance to Rudolf Valentino). The newcomer to the seraglio gets a cold reception from the four existing occupants who, in a very comic scene, improvise a dance to

seduce their master; but in the end the explorer returns to her husband, with only a jangling bracelet round her ankle to shew for her adventure.

The ballet gets off to a bad start, thanks to some weaknesses in interpretation, but regains its zest in the harem scene where the houris—especially Tania Ouspenska and Dany Colletin do wonders. The work ends with a pas-de-deux—very good, but a little too much like any other pas-de-deux and with an over-long exhibition of masculine strength.

Alwyne-Camble did the decor and the costumes in "haute couture" style. Jean-Michel Damase's music was very fine, it included a few discreet borrowings from "Piege de Lumière."

But the most striking thing about this very successful season is, beyond doubt, the wonderful spirit which reigns in the corps de ballet, which has no reason now to envy foreign companies.

Margrethe Schanne, on her first visit to France, won the hearts and minds of the Parisians from the very start. The finesse of her interpretation, her beautiful line, her balance and remarkable powers of elevation, astonished her public, but while they gave an enthusiastic welcome to this wonderful dancer, they were not aware that they were witnessing a display of the French style which Bournonville took to Denmark in the 18th century, and which has been preserved there ever since. Her dancing in *La Sylphide* and *Giselle* have made her name in France as the great romantic dancer.

Alicia Markova had her usual success.

Genia Melikova, on the other hand, confirmed her promise of last year and, dancing *Princess Aurora* and in *Swan Lake*, had from the public, and—something rarer—from the dancers, her promotion to the ranks of the real classical ballerinas.

Jacqueline Moreau is an exquisite soubrette, who shone in *The Enchanted Mill* and *Tertulia* but lost something of her brilliance in ballerina roles.

Denise Bourgeois, dancing the role of Effie in *La Sylphide* in the *Beau Danube* and *Achilles*, is the best character dancer in the company. In this galaxy of stars, Marjorie Tallchief takes a front place. This season she was seen only in her finest roles to the exclusion of the classics, which do not suit her. What a joy it would be to see her dance in *Firebird*!

On the male side, we should first mention Serge Golovine who, after having gone through a painful crisis about which we prefer to remain silent, has regained all his brilliance and has even added to it in the beauty and sensibility of his work. Although the role in *Giselle* hardly seems made for him, he was remarkable for both the character of his variations and the intelligence of his interpretations.

Georges Zoritch has returned to the troupe with enhanced qualities; he was all one could wish for as Markova's partner in *Les Sylphides* and Melikova's in *Aurora* and *Swan Lake* and has to his personal credit a fine revival of the principal role in *Achilles*.

Vladimir Skouratoff, who has been little seen this year because

of an accident to his knee, has lost nothing of his former quality.

Solange Schwarz, a dancer who had almost retired from the stage, danced *Casse Noisette* with Georges Zoritch. Their differences in style, in line and even in stature all went in favour of Zoritch who was truly excellent.

Endless applause greeted the (provisional) return to the Company of Rosella Hightower. She has gained in lyricism and in beauty of interpretation while losing nothing of her fabulous technique. Unfortunately this great star knows nothing of "epaulement" but she now has such great qualities that it is becoming difficult to see her fault.

It was a pleasure to see Daniel Seillier—faithful and invariably forgotten (in the casting)—who never misses a chance to show that he is a most valuable dancer (in *Achilles* and *The Enchanted Mill*). It was pleasant too, to see Tania Ouspenska, (who wins a specially honourable mention for her part in *Prince Igor*, wonderfully revived by Beriosoff), and Dany Colletin, both excellent commediennes; Tania Karina, Andrea Karlsen and Beatrice Consuelo.

We often think that what distinguishes the stars from other members of this Company is the type in which their names appears in the programme—with the exception, that is, of a few members, who in contrast with the rest of the troupe, are incredibly feeble.

The Marquis de Cuevas Ballet faithfully sustains in France an overwhelming interest in the Dance. What more is there to say?



*The winter slogan of the Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells Theatre planners seemed to be "There shall be no ballet".*

*However, often when we despair over much of London's cultural management, up pops a young man with a magic formula*

## Peter Daubeny presents . . .

ONE of the youngest of the impresarios, Peter Daubeny has brought many of the world's dancers to the feet of the Londoner. Recently he excelled himself in two outstanding presentations, both having this in common: variety, verve and vitality.

His first visitors were the Classical Theatre of the People's Republic of China, or as I prefer it, THE PEKING OPERA. This Company with a history dating back to 1250, came to Europe for the first time recently and stayed a short while at the Palace Theatre. Theirs is a fully integrated entertainment giving ballet, opera and drama as one dynamic whole.

### CHINESE MUSICIANS

Though the Company's orchestra is rarely seen on the stage it is an essential part of the

performance. The main body of musicians is made up of percussion, wind, bowed and plucked instruments. It is led by a single-skin drum and a wooden clapper beating the rhythm, and the HU-CH'IN, a two-stringed fiddle. To support these musicians there are a small drum, and a double skin drum set up in a frame. These two underline the musical effects and keep the rhythm from drowning. There is no conductor.

Most of the Chinese instruments in this Company produce fascinating sounds delightful to the ear. For instance, the low pitched, two stringed ERH-HU; the rich, mellow SAN-HSIEN played with a bone plectrum; the four-stringed YU EH-CH'IN, a moon shaped guitar; a sweet voiced flageolet, the HSIASO; the eight hole transverse bamboo flute, the TI-TZE; the SHENG, a hand organ with about 20 bam-

boo pipes; and the SONA, a small horn with a brass mouth-piece. A little gong heralds each entry of the female lead.

### WONDERFUL SHOW

Of the scintillating programme given at the Palace Theatre much still remains in my mind. Musically I liked the haunting bagpipe-like wail in *The Favourite Bids Farewell to The Doomed Ruler*, a well-known story from the 3rd Century, with a superb sword dance. Though so old it had a modern swing, and a captivating lilt to its concubine dance.

*The Lotus Dance* is a ballet based on a number of Central Chinese folk dances, choreographed by Tai-Ai-Lein, and first given in China in 1953. The composer provided resonant, leisurely music for the gliding, skating ballet. *Trouble In Heaven*

one of China's most famous fairy tales going back to the 16th Century, was great fun. The musical sounds were quite heavenly in fact. We had the sweetness of a Strad violin and the lively ringing tones of a harpsichord, and all this from the original Chinese instruments.

A victory dance blending classical and modern, *The Scarf Dance*, bringing the audience almost to its feet to applaud, was accompanied by a high pitched melodic violin sound from the flute.

We also had the orchestra on the stage for a musical folk interlude, *All Birds Pay Homage To The Phoenix*. It was exciting, I found, to hear the reed organ, a SHENG some two thousand years old in conception. Thank you, Peter Daubeny.

### MONEY VERSUS MUSIC

More is the pity then that  
continued on page 10

*A scene from El Cojo Enamorado presented by the Pilar Lopez Spanish Ballet*





# BALLET GUIDE

## Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

|        |            |                                                                                              |
|--------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan.   | 12th       | <i>Cinderella</i> (Fonteyn, <i>Somes</i> , <i>Ashton</i> )                                   |
| "      | 14th (Mat) | <i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> , Act II<br><i>Daphnis &amp; Chloe</i><br><i>Coppelia</i> , Act III |
| "      | 14th (Eve) | <i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> ( <i>Nerina</i> , <i>Clayden</i> , <i>Lane</i> )                    |
| "      | 17th       | <i>Coppelia</i> ( <i>Fifield</i> , <i>Shaw</i> , <i>Hart</i> )                               |
| "      | 18th       | <i>Cinderella</i> (Fonteyn, <i>Somes</i> , <i>Ashton</i> )                                   |
| "      | 20th       | <i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> ( <i>Jackson</i> , <i>Somes</i> , <i>Clayden</i> )                  |
| "      | 21st (Mat) | <i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> ( <i>Elvin</i> , <i>Blair</i> , <i>Graham</i> )                     |
| "      | 24th (Eve) | <i>Ballabile</i><br><i>Rinaldo &amp; Armida</i><br><i>Checkmate</i>                          |
| "      | 26th       | <i>Coppelia</i> ( <i>Linden</i> , <i>Blair</i> , <i>Edwards</i> )                            |
| "      | 28th (Mat) | <i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Fonteyn, <i>Somes</i> , <i>Clayden</i> )                           |
| "      | 28th (Eve) | <i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> ( <i>Beriosova</i> , <i>Chatfield</i> )                             |
| Mon.   | Jan. 30th  | <i>Cinderella</i> ( <i>Elvin</i> , <i>Blair</i> , <i>Ashton</i> )                            |
| Wed.   | Feb. 1st   | <i>Ballabile</i><br><i>Les Sylphides</i><br><i>Checkmate</i>                                 |
| Thur.  | " 2nd      | <i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> ( <i>Grey</i> , <i>Chatfield</i> )                                  |
| Fri.   | " 3rd      | <i>The Shadow</i><br><i>Daphnis &amp; Chloe</i><br><i>Homage to the Queen</i>                |
| Sat.   | " 4th      | <i>Les Sylphides</i><br><i>Ballabile</i><br><i>The Shadow</i>                                |
| (mat.) | "          | "                                                                                            |
| Tues.  | " 7th      | <i>Cinderella</i> ( <i>Nerina</i> , <i>Doyle</i> )                                           |
| Wed.   | " 8th      | <i>Coppelia</i> ( <i>Beriosova</i> , <i>Chatfield</i> )                                      |
| Thur.  | " 9th      | <i>Les Sylphides</i><br><i>Rinaldo &amp; Armida</i><br><i>Homage to the Queen</i>            |

|        |   |        |                                                         |
|--------|---|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Sat.   | } | " 11th | <i>Coppelia</i> ( <i>Fifield</i> , <i>Shaw</i> )        |
| (mat.) |   | "      | "                                                       |
| Wed.   | " | " 15th | <i>The Shadow</i><br><i>La Peri</i><br><i>Checkmate</i> |

## Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet

|      |      |                                            |
|------|------|--------------------------------------------|
| Jan. | 16th | <i>Memorial Theatre, Stratford on Avon</i> |
| "    | 23rd | <i>Gaumont Theatre, Preston</i>            |
| "    | 30th | <i>Odeon, Southend</i>                     |
| Feb. | 6th  | <i>Not announced</i>                       |
| "    | 13th | <i>New Theatre Royal, Norwich</i>          |
| "    | 20th | <i>Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton</i>        |
| "    | 27th | <i>Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham</i>       |

## Festival Ballet

|                 |                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Until Jan. 25th | <i>Casino Theatre, Monte Carlo</i> |
| Feb. 6th        | <i>Gaumont Cinema, Kilburn</i>     |
| " 13th          | <i>Davis Theatre, Croydon</i>      |
| " 20th          | <i>Regal Cinema, Edmonton</i>      |
| " 27th          | <i>Empire Theatre, Liverpool</i>   |

*Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes will be appearing with the Festival Ballet at Monte Carlo on January 14th and 15th.*

**North London Ballet Circle**—Jan. 22nd—*Royal Albert Hall*  
Performance of ballet *Swedish Village* in aid of National Spastic Society, "Children of all Nations Cavalcade."

**Victoria & Albert Museum**—The Sophie Fedorovitch Memorial Exhibition remains open until February 5th, after which it will be shown at a number of centres both in England and Scotland during 1956.

## Continued from Page 9 Peter Daubeny Presents . . .

Peter Daubeny's enterprise should be clouded by a lapse from artistic standards. Not subsidised from Public Funds, it is natural he should want to cram into his shows the largest possible audiences. Yet there are limits. And for anything musical, the Empress Hall is certainly the limit. Putting on the Moiseyev Dance Company he hired that huge, ugly, full of echoing crevices, ice hockey stadium.

Obviously the Soviet visitors considered music as an integral part of their presentation, for they brought over a huge orchestra directed by Samson Galperin. Because of the horrid distortion of sound at the Empress Hall I found it impossible to judge the orchestral performance as a whole, though I did manage to note that the string tone produced was exceedingly lovely.

### RUSSIAN FOLK MUSIC

The major instruments in Russian folk music are the balalaika and the continental version of the accordion. But here the Russians showed singular lack of artistic taste in attempting to modernise and often jazzing up the hauntingly beautiful folk themes. The orchestra took up the simple folk pieces and tried to weld them into those glittering neon lighted bars that serve for Hollywood's "Music for the Movies." What stupid folly! In something so

down to earth as folk dancing much is lost when the original beauty of the single accordion, the balalaika, or the solo fiddle is swamped by phoney orchestrations by a large symphony band.

A folk dance repertoire can be monotonous but the Russians excited us by their variety and the breathtaking precision of their presentation. I was particularly impressed by the superb rhythm of *Khorumi*, an *Adjarian Dance* dating back to the 12th Century. The drum beats pulsated us into silent wondering worshippers. In *The Hora*, vitality was the keynote to the playing and on the stage Benash Zionz with his fiddle gave us some delectable gypsy-like violin tone. *A Sailor's Dance* was a breezy hornpipe reminding me of a similar piece in Walton's *Facade*. And there were some touchingly lyrical string passages in *Spring Dance from the Ukrainian Suite of Folk Dances*.

### LOOKING FORWARD

The two visiting companies from the East showed us that there is no substitute for freshness, enthusiasm and rehearsal. In fact when someone commented to the Chinese on their perfection of performance, one artist replied, "We have not been rehearsing these scenes a few weeks but many centuries."

As the two London resident companies return from their

wanderings after having neglected us during the most seasonal ballet time of the year, I hope their hamper be full to the brim with variety, vitality and verve, wrapped up by a traditional love for perfection.

### AND BACKWARDS

Yet lest my friends at Covent Garden and the Wells feel I weigh in too heavily on the side of commercial impresarios, I now mention Peter Daubeny's recent third presentation, *Ballet Espanol de Pilar Lopez*. Spanish dancing is passionately colourful in its savagery, and this must not be diluted in any way. I cannot understand why so artistic a man as Daubeny should put into the Palace Theatre pit an orchestra so refined, so English and so unsuitable, as he did for these dancers. It was as if a wishy-washy veil had been drawn over the bright Iberian

colours of nature. The orchestral players had never basked in the Mediterranean sunshine, for there was a marked absence of vitality and savage bite in their playing. Often in fact there was a battle between players and dancers in creating different emotional moods. In the dances using Albeniz's *Suite Iberia* (Triana and Albaicin), both lulling coolness and the savagely brilliant brass were missed by strings and trumpets. In all Pilar Lopez's programmes there was only one genuine attempt to portray the dance in music. For *El Amor Brujo* (Manuel de Falla) the orchestra certainly distilled a throbbingly exciting musical brew. Jose Maria Franco conducted.

May I end with a plea to all: Please consider the orchestra and the conductor as integral parts of the ballet. Why not this as the ballet controllers' 1956 resolution?

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# BALLET RAMBERT

By

SONIA ROBERTS

**I**N seeking to praise Ballet Rambert, one must lay aside the tributes prescribed by tradition. A modicum of young dancers, twenty five in all at the present time, many of whom are not yet at the peak of their careers, performing on inadequate stages in the provinces, against scenery which has to stand up to the wear and tear of almost perpetual touring, cannot be expected to produce the kind of spectacle to rival the diamond-bright brilliance of the pre-Revolutionary Russian era.

However, this has never been the aim of Madame Rambert, better known to the world of ballet by the affectionate nickname of "Mim." From the first, she was far too wise to try to graft alien characteristics on to English dancers, a policy which is symbolised in her refusal to let her dancers Russianize their names. In the early days she forbade Harold Turner to do this saying: "You make beautiful turns, so what could be nicer than *Turner*?" More recently when Vassilie Trunoff appeared with the company, he was requested to become Basil Turner to fit in with the nationality of the group.

The style Marie Rambert has evolved over the years has its roots deep in the character of our nation. Rambert tragedy depends for its poignancy on the subtle shades of characterisation and the company has never been afraid to offer humour even satire.

All this is the more remarkable because Madame Rambert herself is of Polish birth, and opened her first school in England in 1920. Now, approaching seventy and several times a grandmother, she still celebrates her triumphs by turning cartwheels, a habit she inaugurated on the roof of London's Princes Theatre some thirty years ago.

Her sprightly mannerisms and vividly bright eyes are the outward manifestations of a dynamic inner vitality. "She has more energy than any of us" says leading dancer Noreen Sopwith.

Madame Rambert's day begins at eight o'clock and she is at the theatre by ten to conduct class personally. Although in the matter of diet she is sufficient of a gastronome to regard salad made without garlic as a thing of horror, lunch is usually but a brief break for a crispbread and yoghurt.

Her formula for



Marie Rambert and Alicia Markova  
Taken during the television performance of *Giselle*

Photo: Mike Davis

making stars is hard work, plus more hard work "to the point of exhaustion" says John Gilpin, recalling his days with Rambert. Yet her pupils are unsparing in their praise "Only Rambert seems able to explain and reproduce the secret beauty of a movement in terms that are right for each different individual" says Alexander Bennett.

Bennett, a Scot from north Edinburgh, who still retains a trace of the Scots accent, became interested in ballet at the age of sixteen. He studied hard for two years but then came a two year break for National Service. He took advantage of this period to learn Russian, languages being one of his hobbies, but "the attitude of the army is scarcely sympathetic to ballet" and although his feats in the gymnasium soon tempered any feelings of scorn held by his colleagues, when he returned to civil life he decided the break in training had been too long and chose the

security of an insurance office.

Nevertheless the theatre remained in his mind, and when he came to London to join the Civil Service he also began classes in the evening with Madame Rambert and soon the theatre claimed him full time.

He believes ballet to be an escapist entertainment to which an element of phantasy is essential, but does not regret the period he spent in commerce, because he feels that this gave him an insight into different characters that is denied to most dancers. For this reason he sees as an example of how the problems of everyday life can be interpreted in ballet. However, his favourite ballet is *Giselle*.

The Rambert company despite the limited scale of its productions has always been noted for its *Giselle*, and the romanticism of the most recent Rambert balleri-

na, Beryl Goldwyn has been compared with the youthful Markova. Beryl is an example of Madame Rambert's flair for noticing talent in embryo.

At fifteen, left jobless by the demise of the Anglo Polish Ballet, Beryl Goldwyn wrote to Madame Rambert asking for work. Recognising her promise Rambert allowed her free tuition at the school and in 1949 she joined the company and rose steadily to the rank of ballerina. Now to the sorrow of balletomanes she has left the stage in order to be able to spend more time with her husband, Christopher Norwood, (brother of Rambert dancer Alison Norwood), who is considering sitting for Parliament. This fact, combined with his duties for the National Coal Board, will keep him and his bride very much in the North country.

From now on, ballerina roles will be shared between Ann Horn

*continued on page 18*



# THE ULANOVA STORY

## PART TWO



*The two photographs are taken from the film Romeo and Juliet*

**T**HE turning point of Ulanova's career came in 1934. Prior to this date she had been a skilful dancer, after it she emerges as a ballerina of world stature, and the reason for the metamorphosis was the production of R. Zakharov's ballet, *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*.

Ulanova does not hesitate to cite this as one of the most important dates of ballet history, and in assessing her judgment we must remember that a ballet, where the narrative and emotional content were on a level capable of competing with the choreography was a revolutionary conception in a land where, isolated from contemporary influence, ballet had blithely continued in the pre-Diaghilev Imperial traditions.

In this poetic drama, it was impossible to present dances which with other costumes could be transplanted into another ballet. The role of Maria, the Polish captive of a

Tartar Khan, gave Ulanova a chance to break away from the succession of scintillating but somewhat empty fairy princesses that had been her lot to date. "They gladdened the eye, but expressed nothing whatever" Ulanova says.

Of course, she excludes *Giselle* from this list but it was not until she came into contact with Vaganova that she realised the full potentialities of this role. Ulanova feels that the theme of this ballet is often misinterpreted by audiences. In her eyes the story of seduction and disillusion that forms the first act is vulgar by comparison with the true message of the white act where the vitality of true love triumphs over the evil wiles of Mrytha and death itself.

The scenario of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* however had an instant appeal for Ulanova for she regards the genius of Pushkin as of the almost sacred quality of Shake-

speare Beethoven and Leonardo da Vinci.

Maria in *The Fountain*, remains her favourite role and for her the highlight of the ballet is the mime-danced dialogue between Maria and Zarema where the different styles of the roles are vividly contrasted.

*The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* was followed by a new production of *Swan Lake* directed by Vaganova. Ulanova says of Vaganova "she enriched me beyond measure, as a dancer and as an actress". In this production Odette and Odile were danced by separate dancers and under such a teacher, hearing the music, as if for the first time, Ulanova saw the role of Odette as the embodiment of the eternal feminine, a figure of noble and touching purity.

After this Ulanova found it necessary to go to Yessentuki for a cure. Although she is eager to dismiss the fact, her health has





always been delicate and the reason that she so developed the lyrical side of her dancing was because during her early years the effort of running and jumping tired her so quickly. It was during this cure she made the acquaintance of the Timme Kachalov family. Madame Timme was a well known actress and her house a rendezvous for artists. In this gay atmosphere Ulanova was able to shake off her natural shyness. As well as imparting her fondness for nature, Yelizaveta Timme was one of Ulanova's sternest critics. When she declared that Ulanova's *Giselle* had "left her cold" they discussed the role together, dissecting her performance, to discover the nuances of feeling and the motives that would bring the character to life.

With such a friend to guide her, Ulanova felt ready to tackle her most difficult assignment to date, *Juliet*.

At first it seemed more than she could accomplish. In the traditional repertoire of the Russian Ballet, the melodic element of the music had been predominant. Confronted by the music of Prokofiev with its unexpected and rapidly changing rhythms, Ulanova, her fellow dancers and the choreographer had only one comment, "un-danceable".

The choreography also had its problems. Of her role Ulanova says "Dancing Juliet for the five hundredth time I shall still have to prepare inwardly for those difficult adagios of the first and third acts".

However to an artist of the sensitivity of Ulanova the most difficult aspect of this work was the psychological one, of balancing an eternal theme with a particular period. Taking her inspiration from Dante and from the very contemporary strains of the score, Ulanova sought the outward traits of her heroine in an intensive study of Renaissance painting.

Despite its period setting Ulanova always looks on *Romeo and Juliet* as an essentially modern ballet because its message is as fresh today as when Shakespeare penned his version of the Boccaccio tragedy. Now in her forties Ulanova has no thought of retirement. Still seeking new means to enrich her art, she feels her recent visit to China greatly added to her portrayal of Tao Hoa, the Chinese dancer in the ballet *Red Poppy*.

With regard to future ballets the life of Joan of Arc has great attractions for her.

Ulanova maintains a passionate loyalty to the land of her birth and to the regime which she so firmly believes helped to shape her career.

As the recipient of three Stalin prizes I am certain she would be most proud to describe herself as the first ballerina of the new Soviet school.

Yet, had her quota of appearances before us been more generous, we in the western world would have almost certainly classified her pure lyricism as the last link with the old

Mariinsky tradition, and far removed from the athletic contortions of her Soviet sisters or the bounding Balanchine-type ballerinas of America who will probably shape the future face of ballet.

Today there is no other country where the special qualities of Ulanova would be so appreciated as in England, for our whole school of dance appreciation has been built round the restrained and delicate interpretation of narrative and character.

It is therefore to be hoped that the present easing of international tension will pave the way for her to visit us, for whether one agrees with her ideology or not, the sincerity and sense of vocation which this great ballerina brings to her work are an inspiration to dancers of every creed and nationality.

S.R.

Our "Famous Ballerina Life Stories" have so far included:

|                |          |                     |
|----------------|----------|---------------------|
| Margot Fonteyn | Pts. 1-3 | Apr.-June 1955      |
| Alicia Markova | Pts. 1-4 | Aug.-Nov. 1955      |
| Ulanova        | Pts. 1-2 | Dec. 1955-Jan. 1956 |

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# BACKSTAGE CAMERA







# BACKSTAGE

**T**HEODORE D'Erlanger has recently founded a Parisian "Higher School of Choreographic Studies"—situated at Alexandre Volinine's Choreographic Academy at 132 Avenue de Villiers.

The new school will be devoted to theoretic study of choreography and its ancillary arts. The lectures will deal with the General History of Dance and Ballet, General History of Art, History of the Theatre, the Principles of Academic and Modern Dance, Popular and Folk-lore Dances, Scenology, Musical Theory and a review of the Dalcroze system of rhythmic dance.

**A**NNA Pavlova will be the subject of a talk by Cleo Nordi on January 27th, and *Before and after Diaghilev* by Marie Rambert on February 17th, both to be given at the Pushkin Club.

**D**ERYK Mendel writes from Paris to rectify our report "Venice—The Opera Ballet of Paris" page 5 of November issue **BALLET TODAY**. Although Maurice Bejart's name appeared on the programme, the role of the young man in the *Picture of St. Michael* was, in fact, danced by Mendel.

**T**URNED out *Proud*, a ballet specially commissioned by the BBC Television Service from Kenneth MacMillan, was seen in the *Music at Ten* programme, directed by Margaret Dale and produced by Christian Simpson.

MacMillan described *Turned out Proud* as 'a show for dancers' rather than a formal ballet in the conventional sense. It is a light-hearted series of nine disconnected episodes in different dance styles, a dancing revue, in effect.

**M**UCH disappointment has been felt in Ireland at the announcement that *Madame Valentina Dutko* has decided to go to America. After two and a half years of serious training the Irish National Ballet group under *Valentina Dutko* has firmly established itself as the foundation for the National Ballet Company, and has given performances to Dublin audiences at the Royal Irish Academy of Music Theatre and the Olympia Theatre, Dublin.

**E**RIK Bruhn, premier danseur, of the Royal Danish Ballet is leaving them to join Ballet Theatre in America. He hopes to return to Copenhagen however from time to time to dance as guest artist.

**G**UESTS at a gala held recently at the Tour d'Argent restaurant in Paris, spent part of the evening digging in the cellar. Their purpose was to bury personal mementoes in air-tight boxes, which will not be opened again for a hundred years.

Among them was *Ludmilla Tcherina*, whose ballet slippers will delight the archaeologically minded balletomanes of 2055.

**G**ILBERT Vernon, ex-Sadler's Wells Theatre ballet dancer is choreographer for the new musical *Wild Grows the Heather* based on *The Little Minister*, which goes into rehearsal in February.

**J**OHN Cranko has written, devised and produced *Cranks*, which was presented at the New Watergate Theatre during December. Music is by John Addison, setting created by John Piper. The cast of four is as follows: *Gordon Heath* (who played the title role in the TV production of *Othello*), *Anthony Newley* (who has a leading role in the film *Cockleshell Heroes*), *Gilbert Vernon* (see para above) and *Marcia Ashton* (who appeared as "Estelle" in the 1955 production of *Vicious Circle* at the Watergate.)

**D**ORIS Zinkeisen designed the decor and costumes for the new production of *Cinderella* which opened at the Palace Theatre on 21st December.

*Emile Littler* adapted the book and also directed. Choreography is by *Michael Charnley*, music arranged by *Hastings Mann*.

**T**HE Little Player's Theatre produced *Beauty and the Beast* as their annual Christmas Show, which opened on 20th December for a four week season. This Theatre, under the arches in Villiers Street, is the modern home of Victorian style entertainment (you buy your drink at the bar and carry it with you to a table at your elbow.) *Don Gemmell*, the well-known Chairman is directing *Beauty and the*

*Beast*, the decor and costumes are designed by *Reginald Woolley*.

**M**ARIA Balinski and *John Gregory* recently gave talks on the *Amateur in Ballet* and *Dance Versus Anti-Dance*. Demonstrations were given by the *Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club*. Further talks are to be arranged in the Spring. So great has been the interest in these talks that it was proposed by *Mr. John Gregory*, principal of the School of Russian Ballet, in whose studio the talks were given, that a Chelsea Ballet Club be formed if sufficient public support is forthcoming. Anyone interested in this project should write to *Mr. G. Garland*, School of Russian Ballet, St. Luke's South Hall, St. Luke's Street, S.W.3.

**L**ONDON is always full of surprises, even to those who know it well. Who would expect to find a restaurant in Cork Street where to the music of a guitar, and with the traditional Spanish singer, authentic flamenco dancing can be seen nightly! *Margarita*, from whom the restaurant takes its name, was trained by *La Quica and Estampio* both of the "Escuela Antigua", and seems equally at home in male or female steps of the Spanish dance. She came to London a year ago to open this restaurant and is now well-known to many dance enthusiasts and students. Incidentally I can recommend the Spanish speciality—Paella, the cooking is excellent and prices reasonable, and a meal of either English or Spanish dishes can be had after the theatre.

**O**N the thirtieth anniversary of its existence the Ballet Rambert is launching an appeal for an endowment fund. The Ballet Rambert is the oldest permanent company in England, and its pioneering work is well known.

Unless this appeal meets with a favourable response the Company will have to suspend its activities.

Subscriptions, however small, will be gratefully accepted. Please send to the Hon. Treasurer, Sir David Waley, K.C.M.G., C.M., M.C., Mercury Theatre

Trust Endowment Fund, 2 Ladbroke Road, W.11. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the Mercury Theatre Trust Endowment Fund and crossed.

**I**N our November number in the article about the Ballets Modernes de Paris, we attributed the score of *Concertino* to Bela Bartok. In fact it is by the French composer J. M. Damase, for whom Igor Fosca did the choreography. Deryk Mendel composed a pas de deux entitled *What the Fly Saw* on music by Bartok, and this was seen in the same performance.

**I**N our December edition we referred to the appointment of Paulette Dynalix as teacher to the corps de ballet at the Opera. Ivor Guest has now written to point out that Mademoiselle Dynalix is not leaving the stage, and has in fact, recently created the role of the nurse in Lifar's *Romeo et Juliette* at the Opera.

## BACKSTAGE CAMERA ON OPPOSITE PAGE

Top Left: Vashi whose appearance in Chicago was reported by George Jackson in our November issue.

Right: Maureen Bruce as the Princess in *Saudades*, first performed by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet at Liverpool.

Bottom Left: Gordon Hamilton and Willy Dirlt photographed by Mike Davis in a Viennese cafe as they talked over their plans for the opening night at the Vienna Staatsoper.

Right: Alicia Markova during her American tour—at New York with her partner Milorad Miskovitch, James A. Doolittle, the producer of the Greek Theatre Association, N.Y., and Martyn Green, the celebrated interpreter of Gilbert and Sullivan, after a performance of *The Mikado*.



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## Young Dancers

*Above : A rehearsal picture of the ballet Swedish Village, to be performed at the Albert Hall (see Diary page 10) in aid of The National Spastic Society. Dancers left to right are, Deirdre Hall, Wendy Brooker, Wendy Kimberley, Sheila Hartley, Ann Shelper, Anne Shelbourne, Linda Curtis, Lynne Ascroft, North London Ballet Circle.*

**T**HE Arts Association of Stage Schools presented their Third National Display of Dancing at the Albert Hall in December. More than 1,000 performers took part and included children from five years of age upwards, from principal dancing schools from all over the country. Funds were in aid of the Institute of Cancer Research.

The Display was devised and produced by Lillian Rowley and praise is due to her and the Organisers for an excellent programme. The dancing was of a high standard, and the way in which the massed cast dispersed to make way for the next item was really outstanding for an amateur show.

**A**NN Truscott, 15-year-old pupil of the Legat School, made her first professional appearance in pantomime this year at the Opera House, Tunbridge Wells.

**J**ULIET Mills, daughter of stage and screen star John Mills and playwright Mary Hayley Bell, also made her debut on the professional stage at Christmas time, as Alice in *Alice Through the Looking Glass* at the Chelsea Palace. Juliet, a pupil at the Elmhurst Ballet School, Camberley, recently took part in their School show.

**H**ILDE Holger's School of Modern Ballet were recently invited by the Masque Theatre Club to give a demonstration of "the approach to creative work, and aspects of training for classical ballet". This was followed by excerpts from *Les Syphides*, *Swan Lake* and *Coppelia*.

**O**UR correspondent in Cairo writes to tell us that **BALLET TODAY** is greatly appreciated in Egypt and much sought after by Egyptian dancers.

We publish on this page a photograph of one of our readers, Lucy Vallencich, aged nine, as she appeared in *La Mort de Cygne* at the Ewart Theatre Memorial Hall, Cairo, this year. Lucy is a pupil of Frida Nichols, founder of the School of Ballet Dancing in Cairo, a well known teacher of classical ballet in Egypt, who was herself a pupil of Marichka Rudolf at the Hamburg Theatre, then toured Europe with the Polygaroff Ballet. From

London she went to Alexandria in 1938, when she opened the Classic Dance Academy. In 1952 her school in Cairo commenced and now numbers 230 pupils.

*Photo : Jacques Sadka.*

**C**HILDREN'S Television will feature *Steps into Ballet*—December 29th, and January 3rd and 12th in a series of three programmes which will try to follow the growth of a ballet. The series was televised last year and because of its success it is being repeated, in a slightly different form.

**I** should like to hear from readers of this page whether they enjoyed *The Mascot*, the short story specially written for **BALLET TODAY** by Lorna Hill, which was included in our Christmas number. A new junior novel by this author is reviewed on page 21.

**T**HE Lombard School of Dancing produced *The Sleeping Beauty* on December 29th and 30th in aid of Dr. Barnardo's Home. This was held on the school premises which have been built inside an old barn and comprise, ballroom, which has been turned into an auditorium and seats 280 people, a stage, cloak rooms and offices in addition to another big studio. All costumes and scenery for this show were made on the premises.

**S**CHOOLS are invited to send in brief reports of their activities. Photographs will be published space permitting. Copy must be received not later than 1st of the month preceding publication.

**T**HANK you for all the beautiful Christmas cards and good wishes you sent to me. I am sorry I cannot acknowledge them personally, but I am sure you will understand. Editor.





## Ballet Rambert (Contd. from Page 11)

and Noreen Sopwith.

Born in Birmingham, Noreen Sopwith was introduced to ballet through the medium of childhood dancing classes, but there was no definite decision to make ballet a career, "that just happened". Asked if she personally found ballet a hard life this neatly fashionable dancer, assented, but with a smile that suggested it would take a lot to make her change her profession.

Noreen, who has also danced with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet says the thing she most enjoys about working with Rambert is "the lovely repertoire" plus the opportunities to dance the really great roles, although she herself feels that it is not a good idea to have favourite roles "each should be tackled on its own merits". For this reason she enjoyed taking part in ballet performances for Ballet Workshop, and finds television appearances interesting. For the future she would like to try choreography, but modestly doubts her ability in what she believes to be a predominantly masculine field.

She enjoys seeing other countries, and was disappointed to find the recent tour of Italy ended before she had a chance to check up on Italian Christmas customs. It was her first visit to Italy. Recalling past tours, she has particularly happy memories of Cork where she found ballet audiences "most appreciative".

Originally she lived in London only to be near her work, but now she prefers it to any other place, with the qualification that the weather could be better.

Norman Dixon also enjoyed Italy. "After all Venice is supposed to be one of the most romantic places in the world, very different from Burton-on-Trent where I was born". He always wanted to go into the theatre but as an actor not a dancer. The thought of dancing never entered his head until he was given a few steps to perform in a dramatic society

production. Speaking of male dancers in general he says "I think we are very fortunate, so many girls are forced into dancing by their parents, whereas with a boy the choice of profession is almost always his own. In any case" he added "my parents were not in a position to help me materially with my career".

Hilarion is a role for which he has a great affection and one which in his opinion calls for sympathetic treatment. "Hilarion is not the personification of evil, like Von Rothbart. He is earthy, unschooled in etiquette, his approach to *Giselle* is tactless, even crude, but his affection is always sincere.

While the basis of his own training has been strictly classical, he is very interested in modern ballet, but thinks that it is a technique which the classically trained dancer needs time to assimilate to perform well.

"Yes, I would like to be a choreographer" he states "but none of that pseudo-psychological stuff for me".

Norman Dixon's leisure pursuit is riding. Although he admits a sense of proportion must be exercised as to the amount, he thinks it is a fallacy that outdoor sport is bad for dancers and cites as proof the fact that swimming is probably the most popular pastime in the Rambert company.

It is not surprising to find a love of sport rampant in the Ballet Rambert, for even in these days of Commonwealth occupation at the Wells this company still recruits most of its dancers from our own island.

Ballet Rambert has become in thirty five years a part of the British way of life. It and its indomitable directrice Marie Rambert have passed from being a mere institution to a precious tradition and it seems almost impossible to believe that unless the present endowment scheme meets with success the company may cease to function.

## Chicago (Contd. from Page 7)

of events. Markova was the delicate, yielding, romantic girl who becomes proud and noble as the result of the action. Isaac Van Grove's orchestration and Clave's designs were excellent.

The corps de ballet of Lyric Theatre is young, well trained. Kenneth Johnson emerged as the company's male star. He has a good technique in solo work and, what is rare in a young dancer, is also a sensitive actor and partner. The tall Arova, as usual, danced elegantly. Barbara Steele is a small and compact dancer with a hard quality of movement which she uses strikingly in demi-caractère roles. Oleg Briansky as Markova's partner was dashing but

danced less well than he did with Festival Ballet.

Ruth Page's dances for the operas were mostly routine. *Aida* contained both her best choreography of the season, the slave dances for Ronald Frazier and the corps, and her worst, the temple scenes. In a noble attempt to frustrate the balletomane and the operahouse and maintain an educated audience, Nicola Rescigno, Lyric Theatre's young conductor and artistic director mixed ballets and short operas on the same programme. I hope that in the next season more of the ballets will be as interesting as most of the operas.



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# Flamenco

## Dancing and Dancers

By David Benn

### PART ONE



A veritable Spanish Armada has descended on the London stage over the past few years. Some of these invasions have been brilliantly successful. Others left an impression, certain other invaders should never have been let out of Spain. This noisy, wild and colourful entertainment is so different, so absolutely un-English, that we come away entertained, delighted, but little more. It we were to stop, as we undoubtedly should after a ballet, to think what it was all about we should come away still wondering and baffled for an answer.

What is it all about? What is it trying to express, if indeed it is trying to express anything? Where does it come from? If it is any consolation to the reader this last question is still baffling historians and folklorists alike in Spain.

"If we were to try to explain it", says the folklorist José Carlos de Luna "we would get nowhere." Be that as it may, no conclusive theory has as yet been advanced on the origin of the dance form known the world over as Flamenco.

Even the origin of the name is a mystery. The most widely accepted theory is that in the XVIth century when the Archduke Charles (later Emperor Charles V of Germany) succeeded his mother Joan I of Castile and came from the Netherlands to be crowned Charles I of Spain, the riotous conduct of his Flemish followers caused the Andalusians to apply the word Flamenco (Flemish) to the gypsies—always regarded almost as outcasts. If this is true, it is still difficult to explain why the name should be revived, having fallen into disuse for some three centuries, as a name for certain types of dances and songs and their performers. The fact remains that over the past years "flamenco" has become almost an international word.

With the rising interest in folklore in the years before the war it soon became clear that Spain, and particularly Andalusia, had far more to offer than many other countries in Europe. Manuel de Falla adopted the folk music of his native Andalusia to the conventional stage and conquered France, Spain and England where his score for the *Three Cornered Hat* will, I hope, continue to delight ballet lovers for many years to come. The ill-fated Federico Garcia Lorca took the legends he had heard at the feet of his illiterate nurse and converted them into immortal plays, poems, and above all scenarios for the famous dancer La Argentinita. The influence of this great ballerina is still to be seen in the company with which her sister Pilar Lopez has conquered London and Edinburgh, and in the company of the

Italian born José Greco, paradoxically enough more popular in Spain than the Spanish born Pilar Lopez, in whose company he spent the formative years of his career. Antonio has brought all the fervour and grace of Andalusia to the European stage and polished it to a brilliant, even if dazzling, spectacle. It seems at times that Lorca has found expression in dance form in the work of Antonio far more than he did in the work of La Argentinita. "How Lorca and Antonio would have loved each other" is a popular cry among lovers of Andalusia. It is essential that we see in the rise of popularity of flamenco not only an exotic form of song and dance but a movement in art as a whole.

Certainly this dance form has been one of the greatest assets to the Spanish Tourist industry. Every year millions of them flock to Andalusia to see the dances of Spain in their natural surroundings.

The tourist will find that he has, on the whole, been satisfactorily catered for if he is prepared to pay. In Seville he will find signposts all over the city directing him to the Guarijo, and advertising in three languages the dances to be seen there. Here in a stable-like wooden building with a floor of beaten earth and romantically ill lit, an added attraction, he will sit at a table and, having paid over ten shillings for his entrance fee and first drink, he will see an hour or more of dancing on a raised stage to the music of a string quartet, disturbed only by the continual noise of cars drawing up outside.

In Granada he will have only to step into the street after dark to be greeted by some indescribably ragged boy with the words "Say, mister. You want to see gypsy dance?" It is useless to pretend not to understand because he possibly knows the same words in a dozen different languages. The only way to get rid of him is to give him a few pesetas. The average tourist, however, is glad of the intrusion. This is after all what he has come to see. He will be led up the steep path into the Albaicin. As he gets nearer the caves he and the other tourists he has met, for it is a popular joke in Granada that there is more French and English spoken in the Albaicin at night than Spanish, will hear the strumming of guitars and the click of castanets. When he arrives at the caves he will certainly see a colourful show and a memorable one. Whether it is worth the exorbitant sum he will be charged is as doubtful as its authenticity.

In nearly every provincial theatre one will see advertised at some time *Espectaculo Folklorico*, words calculated to draw Spaniards and foreigners alike. During the summer anyone who can screech a few words

of Andalusian dialect into a microphone, stamp at it a few times, and is prepared to take some pretentious name such as Juanita de Granada, or de Sevilla, has a good chance of a temporary job. It is cheaper than the night clubs but whether it is worth sitting through a number of sketches in rapid Spanish which, even when they can be understood, put the early English music hall to shame, is a matter for the individual tourist.

It is becoming more and more difficult to see the Spaniard dance for the love of it, especially the gypsy. A romantic aura has sprung up around him. Probably it is largely Bizet's fault that we see in him a contented, even if backward, individual whiling away his days to the sound of guitars and dancing feet. Many tourists go away still not entirely convinced of the fallacy of this—and a fallacy it is. The Spanish gypsy is possibly one of the most poverty stricken people in Europe. If he is seen lounging about in his cave it is because he can't find work. When he doesn't work he doesn't get any kind of unemployment benefit and so he just doesn't eat. Even when he does work his pay is infinitesimal. The life of the singing dancing gypsy is about as romantic as a chain gang. His only means of livelihood lies in the pockets of the foreigners who come to his city. He can clean his shoes, he can act as his guide, he can send his children to beg from him and pick his pockets if smart enough. Nevertheless, his most profitable source of income and the most secure is to provide dance entertainment. Who can then blame him if he sets a price on his art? Hunger has no conscience, artistic or otherwise.

Part 2—"The Historical Background" will be in our next issue.





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## NEW RECORDS

IF you are one of the lucky people who have had a cheque or two for Christmas and your interest in Spanish music has been roused by Pilar Lopez' recent visit, then the two Brunswick records, LAT 8076 and AXTL 1074, of José Greco and his company are very well worthwhile considering. The wild flamenco singing and the stirring zapateados are most exhilarating, but perhaps your taste may lean more towards Turina's *Danzas Fantásticas*, Brunswick AXTL 1076, played by that sensitive pianist, Alicia de Larrocha—it was she who played so beautifully Granados' *Spanish Dances*, reviewed last October.

And so to the verve of Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances* as well as their more gentle and coaxing moments. They are often used for balletic diversissements, quite apart from Psota's *Slavonika* for Ballet Theatre. As one would expect, Kubelik, recently appointed Musical Director of Covent Garden, conducts them with real understanding on Decca LXT 5079-80. The fourth side is Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* and although he gives it a thoroughly enjoyable performance, personally I prefer a little more ardour to the romantic side.

Robert Irving and the Philharmonia give us excellent performances on two records of much needed ballet music. Firstly, an appreciably fuller *Sylvia*, HMV. CLP 1058, than the limited suite to which we are accustomed these days. It includes such things as the opening scherzo and pastorale, and the enchanting music for the final pas de deux. It is certainly a disc that every ballet-goer should have to recall some of Ashton's finest choreography.

The other is Dohnanyi's *Suite in F Sharp minor*, HMV. CLP 1043, which was of course used by Cranko for *The Shadow*. Irving inspires some excellent playing and shows a real understanding and interest in this delightful work. To say that his performance matches the dancing of Beriosova in the ballet is paying a compliment of high order. In addition, the coupling is *Hamlet* and here again is a first class rendering—don't miss it!

Two of Fistoulari's recordings that have come my way this month, are quite satisfactory and compare most favourably with any rivals. Grieg's *Peer Gynt*

*Suite* formed part of Harold Lander's *Printemps*, for the Royal Danish Ballet; while the second of the *Norwegian Dances* was an entrancing divertissement in the repertoire of the Pavlova company. Both are on Parlophone PMD 1025. Tchaikovsky had a great love of Mozart, which found an outward expression in his *Fourth Orchestral Suite*, Parlophone PMC 1028. It is often felt that embellishments by a romantic composer such as Tchaikovsky are unsuited to the elegant themes of Mozart but this is a matter of period and opinion. Balanchine favoured it for one of his earlier ballets, *Mozartiana*, which proved successful.

As this is the time of year when one buys more records than usual, I feel I should include these, which are excellent and are sure to please you: Reiner's conducting of Strauss' *Dance of the Seven Veils*, HMV. ALP 1214, used by Hightower for her pas seul, *Salomé*; *Nobilissima Visione* ballet suite and Brahms' *St. Anthony Chorale* used by Alonso for her first ballet, *Ensago Sinfónico*, Columbia 33CX1241; and Andá playing Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata, Columbia 33CX1302, choreographed by Massine for Ballet Theatre; Bruch's *Violin Concerto*, Columbia 33CX1268—used by Dolin for his ballet, *Pas de l'Éve*; ballet music from the *Damnation of Faust*, Decca LW 5176; *Daphnis and Chloe*, London D1L 93048; Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto*, Capitol C1L 7693—Gore's *Winter Night*; and Debussy's *Children's Corner*, Columbia 33CX1282—Cranko's ballet.

I have received from the EMI group their yearly catalogues containing the usual full and interesting detail. I was very taken with the new idea of their latest special catalogue covering all their LPs, in which the usual lists of records have been much enlivened by the addition of many illustrated notes and articles on composers, artists, operahouses, etc. There is an entire section devoted to ballet and this is particularly well illustrated. The notes are by Pigeon Crowle, who is well known to readers of *BALLET TODAY*. At the time of writing, this section is being extended and will be issued separately.

B.C.

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ANN HUTCHINSON  
*Labanotation. By Ann  
 Hutchinson. (Phoenix, 25s.)*

THIS is the English edition of a book by the American authority on this form of dance notation which was reviewed in *BALLET TODAY* in August, 1954. Its publication in this country is most timely in view of the controversy now raging in ballet circles over the rival merits of this system and the new Benesh one. Until recent times there has been no adequate way of setting down in black and white the complete choreography of a ballet. A ballet could only survive as long as the living memories of those who handed it on. If a gap became too wide, the ballet was lost forever. That is why so few of the great ballets of the past have descended to us. Even the ciné-camera has its limitations and is too expensive to be practical. The New York Dance Notation Bureau under its president, Ann Hutchinson, claims to have perfected a form, after 25 years of patient work by a large number of teachers, so comprehensive that the smallest detail of movement, even a facial expression, can be set down; and it has been used to record the works of a number of celebrated choreographers, notably those of Balanchine.

At one time, I understand, this method was taken up by the Sadler's Wells, but it now appears they are sponsoring the system recently evolved by Rudolf Benesh and his wife, Joan, who is a member of the Company. The inventors claim that though its shorthand is very simple and quickly learnt, it can encompass the intricacies of dance in all its variations. Its opponents question whether a complex movement pattern can be set down with, apparently, only a few symbols. That it may be adequate when used by a closed group working with a familiar dance form as in the case of Sadler's Wells, but is it capable of recording the works of any choreographer and all forms of the dance in minute detail? As yet no text books of the Benesh method are available, and the argument continues. This book is a complete exposition of the system first initiated by Rudolf Laban.

THALIA MARIA with  
 LEE WYNDHAM

*Ballet—Home Practice for  
 Beginners. By Thalia Maria  
 with Lee Wyndham. (Constable,  
 8s. 6d.)*

I always feel a little anxious when I see a new book on ballet exercises for beginners for so much harm can be done if exercises are incorrectly carried out. If the child has a good

teacher it is best if he does just what is set by that teacher. If the teacher is bad—and there are quite a number going about—then a book is not going to put matters right.

But this little book is so wise, and its elementary barre lessons so clear and simple that I feel it cannot be anything but helpful.

There is a glossary of ballet terms and many excellent drawings, while the foreword should be read by every parent of every beginner.

LORNA HILL

*Return to the Wells. By Lorna Hill. (Evans, 9s. 6d.)*

A sequel to *Ella at the Wells*, this junior novel should be a successful addition to Lorna Hill's well-known series. The heroine, a girl from a mining village, having attained a ballet training and the Sadler's Wells company, is just about to embark on a triumphant career when her health breaks down.

Characters from previous books re-appear in fresh adventures as Ella's story develops. The background is mainly balletic but there is an attractive Swiss interlude which gives the tale its happy ending.

HUGH FISHER

*Dancers of Today Series:  
 Michael Somes, No. 7; Beryl Grey, No. 8. Ed. by Hugh Fisher. (A. & C. Black, 6s. each.)*

MICHAEL Somes has spent the whole of his professional life with the Sadler's Wells Ballet. He was a young dancer of the greatest promise when his career was seriously jeopardised as the result of an injury sustained during war service. By sheer determination and hard work he has fought his way back and this book is a welcome record of the work of one who is now the leading English danseur noble and Fonteyn's splendid partner.

Beryl Grey is of all English ballerinas the most complete product of the Sadler's Wells School. The short text and many photographs in this book describe the career of this great dancer who survived the hazards of being a child prodigy—she danced Odette-Odile on her fifteenth birthday and Giselle before she was seventeen—to become an artist and technician of the highest calibre.

# BOOKS

Reviewed by  
 PIGEON CROWLE

ARNOLD HASKELL,  
 MARK BONHAM CARTER and  
 MICHAEL WOOD

*Gala Performance. Edited by  
 Arnold Haskell, Mark Bonham  
 Carter and Michael Wood.  
 (Collins, £2 2s. 0d.)*

THIS luscious book is bound to give great pleasure to its lucky possessor. Graced by a charming colour photograph of Princess Margaret who has written the foreword, it celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of Sadler's Wells Ballet and represents a tribute to all those who have played a part in this. Sacheverel Sitwell in a prologue sets the scene before English ballet made its appearance and de Valois closes the performance with a very provocative and pertinent article on today's problems in ballet. In between the story of the senior and junior company is developed from various angles in text and photographs by such experts as Irving, on Music, Haskell, on the English style and the School that

fosters it, and Clark, on decor. Sir Kenneth is not correct, by the way, in stating that Messel's *Comus* designs were for Sadler's Wells Theatre or (by inference) that Hurry's decor for *Hamlet* was also created for this theatre. Both were first seen at the New Theatre then the Company's wartime home.

A nostalgic section is the series of early photographs with William Chappell's comments written around them in facsimile. Here is everyone looking very youthful, rather touching, and sometimes chubby. The very first picture recalls my own first memory of de Valois in the Vic-Wells Ballet—in a solo divertissement entitled *Pride*. Here, indeed, are the snows of yester year!

There are seven colour plates of decor, while the numerous and excellent photographs appear to include all past and present dancers of importance with the exception, it would seem, of David Paltenghi, who was one of the mainstays of the Company and a tower of strength to its ballerinas when its male dancers were so depleted by the call-up.

The book is a credit to its editors. All contributions have been made without payment and the earnings will go towards an endowment for the Sadler's Wells Ballet School.



## ULANOVA

### THE MAKING OF A BALLERINA

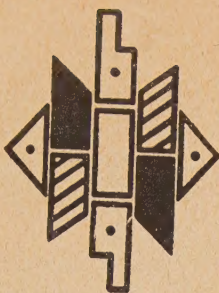
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# LABANOTATION

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**Ann Hutchinson**

*(President of the New York Dance Notation Bureau)*

*Preface by George Balanchine  
Introduction by Rudolf Laban*

This is the complete exposition by a leading authority of a successful system for recording human movement. Initiated by Rudolf Laban and perfected through twenty-five years of work by a host of teachers, Labanotation is now affecting ballet and dance in much the same way that the introduction and perfection of musical notation influenced music during the Renaissance.

So comprehensive is the system that it can set down a facial expression if need be, and so simple that it is easily learned by young dance students. For these reasons it is widely used in dancing schools throughout the world. By means of Labanotation it is possible to reproduce on the London stage musical comedy dance numbers exactly as they were first seen in New York (this was done in the case of *Kiss Me Kate*), and the system also has application in such important fields as time-and-motion study.

This text book is the full and authoritative exposition of Labanotation. It was compiled with the aid of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation by Miss Ann Hutchinson, President of the New York Dance Notation Bureau.

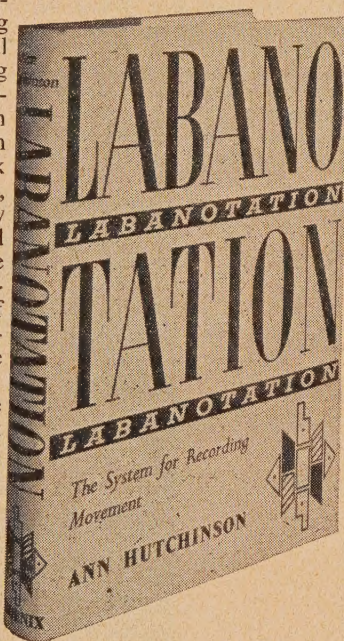
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THROUGH YOUR BOOKSHOP



# LEARNING TO DANCE

**T**HERE is nothing particularly new about dance notation. It was tried centuries ago as an aide memoire to important Court Ballets and Masques; but as the symbols used were based on the names of steps they proved very inadequate, since they left out arm movements and also expression. In the late 17th century a system reproducing the floor-track was used, indicating the kind of step to be done along this track—but this again was limited to foot-work. Then some experimenters started drawing stick-figures, which was an improvement, but by no means solved all the problems involved. The early attempts at notation all suffered from being two-dimensional; they showed no rhythmic sequence. When attempts were made to counteract this by grafting on ideas derived from musical notes, they became so complicated and cumbersome that they inevitably had only a limited appeal. They also had the inherent weakness of being applicable only to one form of dance.

The essential qualities of a workable system suitable for universal use should be simplicity, accuracy and economy. The symbols must be fundamental—that is to say, they must be such that they can apply to any form of dance. They must be easy to read and to write; they must be graphic, so that they convey a descriptive idea in a glance; and they must be so adaptable that by their use the most minute details can be registered with scrupulous precision.

One system that has already stood the test of application during the last thirty years or more is known as Labanotation. "It is based," says Ann Hutchinson, "on the structure of the body and its movement in space, but not in any single dance-style. Movement itself is scientifically analysed and reduced to its elements—the part of the body that moves; the time and space occupied by that movement; and the dynamics, or manner of the performance. These apply to all forms of dance."

Rudolf Laban made his first experiments when he was forming his theories on space harmony and the qualities of movement, and by 1928, when his book "Dance Script" appeared, his pupils all over the Continent were already using the system. It then spread to the United States, and was developed by the

Dance Notation Bureau, of which Ann Hutchinson is President, since then it has proved its usefulness in many spheres of dance and dance-teaching. Miss Hutchinson is at present in this country, where she finds a large following for Labanotation is being built up. The detailed Text Book on the system is now published and is on sale in London; other works dealing with Labanotation are also becoming available over here.

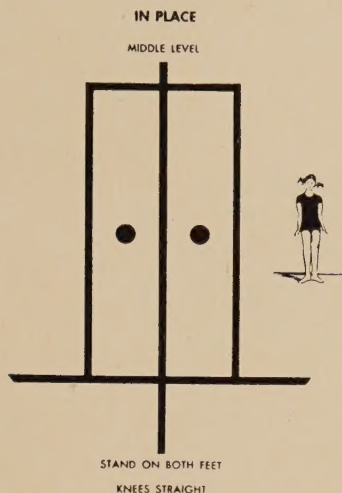
"The symbols," Miss Hutchinson explains, "are rectangular figures, arranged on a three-line staff, to be read from the bottom upwards. The central line represents a line drawn through the centre of the body, plumb from the head; symbols placed on the right of that line represent movements on the right side of the body, those on the left are for the left-side movements. The part of the body that moves (leg, arm, etc.) is denoted by the placing of the symbol on the vertical staff; the level, by its shading; the time, by its length. There is no need for extensive verbal explanation once the meaning of the various symbols—the actual vocabulary—has been mastered, because the symbols, reducing the movements to their basic elements, graphically illustrate every combination of these elements."

Teachers find the system of immense advantage when dealing with pupils of all ages, even those who have no previous dance experience. The use of the symbols becomes a kind of fascinating game in its initial stages—so absorbing that children will often play it on their own initiative in their spare time, without any urging whatsoever. In class, children as young as five years of age can be interested by means of cut-outs, which are laid on the floor in any given order. As the movement is taught, the appropriate symbols are used; thus the youngsters progress as they grow, reading the movements they have learnt and understood. "Naturally only a general indication of movement is given in notation during the early stages," says Miss Hutchinson. Just as in ordinary education, a child's vocabulary grows when it begins to read and write, the young dancer's progress develops markedly with this script-approach to dance-education. As the child grows older and its understanding of movement increases, the finer points of technique and performance

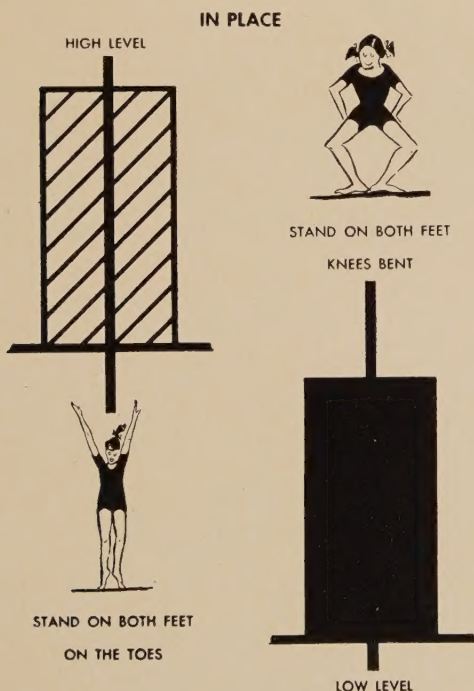


# WITH LABANOTATION

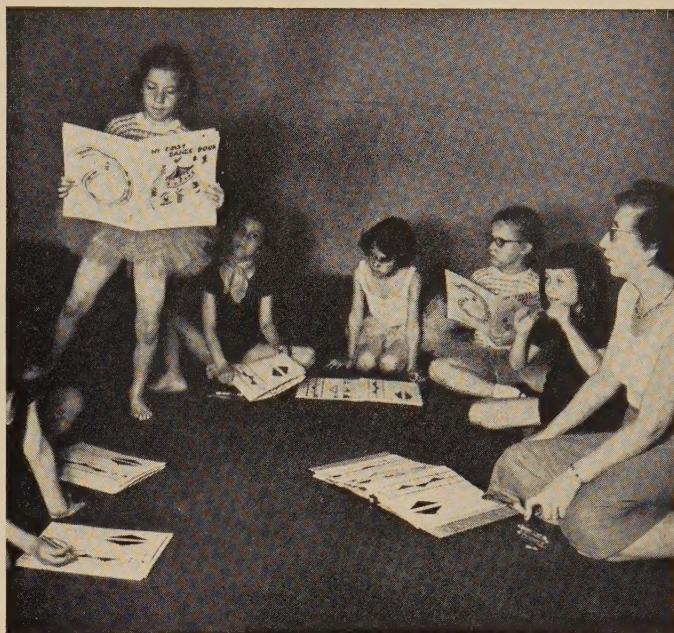
Ann Hutchinson, President of The Dance Notation Bureau in New York, has given "Ballet Today" a series of interviews describing this system of instruction. *Interviewed by ELISABETHE CORATHIEL.*



*This simple rectangular figure represents "in place", middle level, in 1st position.*



*High Level in place in 1st position. Changing Levels starting from 1st position.  
Low Level in place in 1st position.*



*Students in dance class using Labanotation at the Allen's Lane Art Centre, in Philadelphia, U.S.A. Teacher at the right is Jeri Packman. The book in use above and illustrations on this page are from "My First Dance Book" by Nadia Chilkovsky.*

are not only physically demonstrated in class, but at the same time illustrated through the appropriate symbols.

"Children enjoy it. They not only make their own symbols—cut-outs in cardboard or stiff paper—but they 'write' dance on the floor or even on the walls in chalk. Since chalk washes off easily, this mode of self-expression can be encouraged and it provides a break and a rest during class work. The big thrill for the children is to have a dance book (notation, of course) to take home. Parents report that they sit quietly looking at the pages and discussing what the teacher has said."

Sometimes it helps in other ways too. Miss Hutchinson recalls an incident that occurred at the Philadelphia Musical Academy, where all the dance teachers know Labanotation and speak in its terms. "A teacher was having difficulty in explaining an enchainement to a group of nine-year-olds. Suddenly he remembered that these youngsters had grown up with Labanotation, so he grabbed a piece of chalk and quickly drew the three staff-lines on the floor. "Here it is," he said, "You start in fifth position, here, then you have the upbeat preparation there, *before* the count of one, so that your sliding step comes there, right on the beat." That cleared up the difficulty instantly. The young-

sters started dancing the pattern as they saw it written, and a much larger percentage of the class got it right."

Miss Hutchinson tells me the professional dance world here in London is already using the system in a very interesting way. Henry Haythorne wrote down all the dances from the show *Can-Can* and reproduced the choreography from the score for the touring company. Dancers currently in *The Pajama Game* are continuing to use Labanotation, having found it invaluable as an aid to understanding and grasping different styles of dance. Being interested in careers as choreographers or dance directors, they realize also the importance of making use of notation in those capacities.

Teachers are also becoming increasingly aware of its value, and often use it as a convenient shorthand for intercommunication or for keeping records. In this connection, says Miss Hutchinson it is interesting to note that the ballet teachers of Holland Canada, Brazil and California are already exchanging ideas through Labanotation. Choreographers use it in working out movement-patterns and jotting down ideas to prevent the loss of valuable material, which saves much time at rehearsal and, of course, provides the outline for the finished score once the work is completed.

*Pt. 2.—How Notation Works will be in our next issue.*

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# ALL THE STARS

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Alicia Markova  
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Svetlana Beriosova  
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